

REMARKS

Claim Rejections

Claims 2 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mizobe (U.S. 5,249,104). Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizobe in view of Reynolds (2002/0059743 A1). Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizobe.

Drawings

It is noted that no Patent Drawing Review (Form PTO-948) was received with the outstanding Office Action. Thus, Applicant must assume that the drawings are acceptable as filed.

Claim Amendments

By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 4 and 6, and amended claims 2 and 5. It is believed that amended claims 2 and 5 specifically set forth each element of Applicant's invention in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, and define subject matter that is patentably distinguishable over the cited prior art, taken individually or in combination.

Claim 2 has been amended to include the subject matter of cancelled claim 4. Claim 5 has been rewritten as a dependent claim depending from independent claim 2.

The cited reference to Mizobe discloses an optical display device including LEDs (17), a transparent member (14), a box-like member (13) with pattern display portions (13B), and non-transmissive coatings (19) formed between the pattern display portions.

On page 4 of the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner admits that Mizobe "does not teach a seat body having circuit board bearing LEDs and operationally coupled to a circuit electronically controlling sequential actuation and flashing of the LEDs." Mizobe does not teach a plurality of shallow grooves formed on a top portion thereof and receiving the articles of display; nor does Mizobe teach each of

the plurality of light emitting diodes aligning with one of the plurality of shallow grooves to illuminate the articles of display.

It is axiomatic in U.S. patent law that, in order for a reference to anticipate a claimed structure, it must clearly disclose each and every feature of the claimed structure. Applicant respectfully submits that it is abundantly clear, as discussed above, that Mizobe does not disclose each and every feature of Applicant's claims and, therefore, could not possibly anticipate these claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102. Absent a specific showing of these features, Mizobe cannot be said to anticipate either of Applicant's amended claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

The secondary reference to Reynolds discloses a cantilevered display mechanism having a circuit board (280) and LED lights (282) that may flash or may be operated sequentially.

Reynolds does not teach a plurality of shallow grooves formed on a top portion thereof and receiving the articles of display; a circuit substrate board inserted into the recess of the seat body; nor does Reynolds teach each of the plurality of light emitting diodes aligning with one of the plurality of shallow grooves to illuminate the articles of display.

Even if the teachings of Mizobe and Reynolds were combined, as suggested by the Examiner, the resultant combination does not suggest a plurality of shallow grooves formed on a top portion thereof and receiving the articles of display; nor does the combination suggest each of the plurality of light emitting diodes aligning with one of the plurality of shallow grooves to illuminate the articles of display.

It is a basic principle of U.S. patent law that it is improper to arbitrarily pick and choose prior art patents and combine selected portions of the selected patents on the basis of Applicant's disclosure to create a hypothetical combination which allegedly renders a claim obvious, unless there is some direction in the selected prior art patents to combine the selected teachings in a manner so as to negate the patentability of the claimed subject matter. This principle was enunciated over 40 years ago by the Court of Customs and Patent Appeals in In re Rothermel and Waddell, 125 USPQ 328 (CCPA 1960) wherein the court stated, at page 331:

The examiner and the board in rejecting the
appealed claims did so by what appears to us to be a

piecemeal reconstruction of the prior art patents in the light of appellants' disclosure. ... It is easy now to attribute to this prior art the knowledge which was first made available by appellants and then to assume that it would have been obvious to one having the ordinary skill in the art to make these suggested reconstructions. While such a reconstruction of the art may be an alluring way to rationalize a rejection of the claims, it is not the type of rejection which the statute authorizes.

The same conclusion was later reached by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Orthopedic Equipment Company Inc. v. United States, 217 USPQ 193 (Fed.Cir. 1983). In that decision, the court stated, at page 199:

As has been previously explained, the available art shows each of the elements of the claims in suit. Armed with this information, would it then be non-obvious to this person of ordinary skill in the art to coordinate these elements in the same manner as the claims in suit? The difficulty which attaches to all honest attempts to answer this question can be attributed to the strong temptation to rely on hindsight while undertaking this evaluation. It is wrong to use the patent in suit as a guide through the maze of prior art references, combining the right references in the right way so as to achieve the result of the claims in suit. Monday morning quarterbacking is quite improper when resolving the question of non-obviousness in a court of law.

In In re Geiger, 2 USPQ2d, 1276 (Fed.Cir. 1987) the court stated, at page 1278:

We agree with appellant that the PTO has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Obviousness cannot be established by combining the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention, absent some teaching suggestion or incentive supporting the combination.

Applicant submits that there is not the slightest suggestion in either Mizobe or Reynolds that their respective teachings may be combined as suggested by the Examiner. Case law is clear that, absent any such teaching or suggestion in the prior art, such a combination cannot be made under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Neither Mizobe, nor Reynolds, disclose or suggest a modification of their specifically disclosed structures that would lead one having ordinary skill in the art to arrive at Applicant's claimed structure. Applicant hereby respectfully submits that no combination of the cited prior art renders obvious Applicant's amended claims.

Summary

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant submits that this application is now in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested. Should any points remain in issue, which the Examiner feels could best be resolved by either a personal or a telephone interview, it is urged that Applicant's local attorney be contacted at the exchange listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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